Parts of the Mass

The Mass follows a "fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1346). Though the Mass is one unified act of worship, it consists of many parts, each with its own purpose and meaning. The entries in this article follow the order in which the parts occur in the Mass.

Introductory Rites: "The rites that precede the Liturgy of the Word, namely, the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the *Kyrie*, the *Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest)* and Collect, have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation. Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM], no. 46).

Collect: "The [opening] prayer . . . through which the character of the celebration finds expression" (GIRM, no. 54). This prayer literally "collects" the prayers of all who are gathered into one prayer led by the priest celebrant.

Liturgy of the Word: "The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them. As for the Homily, the Profession of Faith, and the Universal Prayer, they develop and conclude it" (GIRM, no. 55).

Creed: A brief, normative summary statement or profession of Christian faith. The Nicene Creed, which is recited or chanted at Mass, comes from the Councils of Nicea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381).

Canon of the Mass: The central part of the Mass, also known as the Eucharistic Prayer or anaphora, which is the prayer of thanksgiving and consecration. It begins with the Preface Dialogue (i.e., "The Lord be with you. . . . Lift up your hearts. . . . Let us give thanks to the Lord our God") and concludes with a final Doxology ("Through him, and with him, and in him") and Amen.

Epiclesis: The prayer petitioning the Father to send the Holy Spirit to sanctify offerings of bread and wine so that they may become the Body and Blood of Christ.

Consecration: The consecration is that part of the Eucharistic Prayer during which the priest prays the Lord's words of institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Through this prayer the bread and wine become the risen Body and Blood of Jesus.

Anamnesis: From the Greek, meaning "remembrance." We remember Jesus' historical saving deeds in the liturgical action of the Church, which inspires thanksgiving and praise. Every Eucharistic Prayer contains an anamnesis or memorial in which the Church calls to mind the Passion, Resurrection, and glorious return of Christ Jesus.

Doxology: A Christian prayer that gives praise and glory to God often in a special way to the three divine Persons of the Trinity. Liturgical prayers, including the Eucharistic Prayer, traditionally conclude with the Doxology "to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit."

Communion Rite: The preparatory rites, consisting of the Lord's Prayer, the Rite of Peace, and the Fraction, lead the faithful to Holy Communion (see GIRM, no. 80). The Prayer after Communion expresses the Church's gratitude for the mysteries celebrated and received.

Rite of Peace: The rite "by which the Church entreats peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament" (GIRM, no. 82).

Fraction: "The Priest breaks the Eucharistic Bread. . . . The gesture of breaking bread done by Christ at the Last Supper . . . in apostolic times gave the entire Eucharistic Action its name" (GIRM, no. 83).

Communion: Holy Communion, the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

Concluding Rites: "To the Concluding Rites belong the following: brief announcements . . . ; the Priest's Greeting and Blessing . . . ; the Dismissal of the people by the Deacon or the Priest, so that each may go back to doing good works, praising and blessing God; the kissing of the altar by the Priest and the Deacon, followed by a profound bow to the altar by the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers" (GIRM, no. 90).

REFERENCES

Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2000.

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